



News and Views

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Pat Wagner sharing her wealth of knowledge with the Institooters

Collaborating with Community Groups and Friends of the Library

Pat Wagner began Tuesday morning by explaining the importance of a planning calendar for library projects. As Pat explained, "If the plan is in your head, there is no plan." A good planning calendar is a physical calendar that contains the following:

1) the name of the project, 2) the name of the person in charge of the project, 3) the contact information of the person in charge, 4) and a detailed timeline. It is important to remember that most good planning calendars are timed months in advance of the project deadline.

Next, Ms. Wagner moved on to Tuesday's topic - how to collaborate effectively with community and Friends groups. She began the discussion by explaining the concept of a community. According to Ms. Wagner, "community is the hello to everyone, the gift that is on the recipient's terms, the shared work, forgiveness and celebration."

Networking is a key tool in building successful relationships with the members of a library community. The five rules of networking are: 1) be useful, 2) don't be boring, 3) listen, 4) ask questions, and 5) play the wild card. Ms. Wagner had the Institooters perform several exercises that allowed each student to converse with others they did not know very well. By using the network rules, the Institooters were able to see how much more effective their communication could become. By the end of the exercises, the students felt that they had more to talk about, that their discussions were more in depth, and that it was getting easier to communicate overall.

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The two differences that keep people from building a good network are socio-economic issues and age. Other identified barriers included inertia (allowing oneself to keep doing nothing), time constraints, and resistance from the other party.

In the afternoon, the Institooters discussed governance issues that occur when working with other groups. Governance answers the questions: 1) Who makes the decisions? 2) What is the decision to be made?

3) How will the decision be made? Some problems that often develop between two groups include battles over leadership, false assumptions, warm chats with no outcomes, lack of accountability, deadline differences, and mind reading. In working with other groups, it is sometimes a good idea to start with small projects (one-time events, events only lasting one day/evening, etc.), to have plenty of variety in the projects, and to always check references to make sure the other group is credible.

The final discussion of the day centered on working with Friends of the Library groups. Ms. Wagner explained that Friends of the Library groups are needed to 1) raise money for the library, 2) recruit volunteers, and 3) advocate for the library. It is important to remember that the library does not control the Friends group and that the Friends group cannot control the operations of the library, though it is always helpful to listen to their suggestions.

Ms. Wagner concluded her second day at the Institute by asking the Institooters what they are prepared to give up or stop doing in order to make good changes for their

libraries. Responses included delegation of work to employees, weeding of older print encyclopedias, and moving the reference area to make way for a young adult collection.

Institooters Have Great Ideas

The Institooters were asked to split into six groups representing various community entities and then provide a list of ten ideas for collaborating with these groups to provide programs to the community. Here are their ideas:

Hospitals – Prescription to read, monthly health issues, children's shot clinic, nutrition for pre-schoolers, teenage pregnancies, magazines, diabetes screening, organ donation awareness, blood drive, hospice workshop, Medicare drug card education, and TennCare and alternative options.

Schools – Obtain AR List so books in the public library can be marked, advanced teachers' assignments, advance homework helpers, Pre-K registration packets, partnership/grant to obtain books and computer programs, teacher book pickup, fundraiser w/high school (swing night), PTA carnivals, Jr. Beta and high school Beta club homework help, community service for high school students, and volunteers.

Malls – fashion show, book fair w/book store, storytelling (adult and family), library kiosk in the mall, open mike night w/music store, cooking show or cookbook author signings w/kitchen stores, bracelet sale @library (early bird admittance to sales), author signings at sporting good stores, kids story hour by library staff, and retail job fair for youths.

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Chamber of Commerce – Imagination library, book sale, leadership course, small business, fall festival, career day symposium, history day, library small town tour open house (Christmas, etc.), community calendar, and business of the month.

Parks – Halloween in the park, reading rally, pool and pizza party, park rangers, field day, train ride, read out in the park, bike ride for summer reading program, library staff vs. friends of the library softball game, skateboard party for teens.

Senior Centers – Audio and visual materials in nursing homes, computer classes, transporting seniors to library or setting up book station/bookmobile at center, connect daycares and seniors for story times, programs, etc., include seniors in seasonal events and crafts w/children and teens, establish a volunteer program for them, card night/games for seniors, oral histories (e.g. WWII Program), classes on dealing with aging, and various programs to get the blood circulating.

All of the groups came up with some great ideas. Let's hope they can make some of these happen at their libraries!

Photo of the Day

Well, maybe yesterday...



Jane helps the Institooters start the morning right with a little dancing!

Quotable Quotes...

Yes, it's that time again! Here are some of the "quotable quotes" we've heard so far at the Institute!

"Life is a family reunion" - Pat Wagner

"May I be your WACKO?" – Pat Wagner

"Confusion to our enemies"

- A toast by the director of
The Denver Public Library

"Has anyone seen Camilla?"

- Curt True

"I'm not a house painter, but I sleep with one."

- Dinah Harris

"You cannot be intimidated without your permission."

- Eleanor Roosevelt via Pat Wagner

"Please tell me why you've been pouting for three days." - David Fulkerson

"They weren't smart enough to figure out that I wasn't the smartest one at the table."

- Curt True

"He never married? Then why didn't you tell us about him?"

- Virginia Borrelli